

center stage

# Nineteen Eighty-Four

Big Brother is watching you.

Adapted by Bryon Cahill from the novel by George Orwell

Illustrations by Alan Brooks

## CHARACTERS

(main characters in boldface)

Narrators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Winston's Thoughts

**Winston Smith**, an employee  
in the Records Department  
at the Ministry of Truth

Winston's Words, the words  
Winston writes in his diary

**Julia**, an employee at the  
Ministry of Truth

Mrs. Parsons, Winston's  
neighbor

Boy

Girl

**O'Brien**, a man with a cause

Syme, an employee in the  
Research Department at the  
Ministry of Truth

Mr. Charrington, the owner of  
an antique shop

Iron Voice

Guard

Prisoner

## SCENE 1

**Narrator 1:** It is a bright, cold day in April, and the clocks are striking 13.

**Narrator 2:** Winston Smith enters his apartment building, escaping the vile wind outside. The hallway smells of boiled cabbage and old rag mats.

**Narrator 3:** He walks up seven flights of stairs. On every floor, there is an enormous poster showing a man's face. It is one of those pictures that is so **contrived** that the eyes follow you around when you move.



**Narrator 4 :** The caption under the face reads: BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU.

**Narrator 5:** Winston enters his apartment and immediately sees the patrol helicopters hovering outside his window.

**Winston's Thoughts:** The patrols do not matter, however. Only the Thought Police matter.

**Narr 1:** There is a large telescreen in Winston's apartment that transmits and receives information simultaneously. A voice from the telescreen is rattling off

facts about how things are better today than they ever were.

**Narr 2:** These telescreens, like the posters of Big Brother, are everywhere in London. You never know when someone might be watching you on the other side of the telescreens. In fact, it is **conceivable** that you are being watched all the time.

**Winston's Thoughts:** Were there always these rotting 19th-century houses? Their windows patched with cardboard and the walls sagging in all directions? Did the bombs always drop?

**Narr 3:** But it is no use. He cannot remember anything from his childhood, nothing from a different time. There has always been war.

**Narr 4:** The building where Winston works, the Ministry of Truth, is within walking distance from his apartment. He stands by his window and can easily read

**\* vocab**

**CONTRIVED:** planned, schemed, done on purpose to produce a desired effect

**CONCEIVABLE:** possible



the three slogans of the Party that are etched in giant letters on his office building.

**Winston Smith:** WAR IS PEACE. FREEDOM IS SLAVERY. IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

**Narr 5:** Slowly and carefully, Winston goes to his desk in the corner of the room and removes a book from a drawer. He intends to use the book as a diary, but he has to be extremely careful. If his diary is **detected**, it is reasonably certain that he will be punished by death, or at least 25 years in a forced labor camp.

**Narr 1:** Winston positions his body in the chair so that his back is to the telescreen. Hiding his work cleverly, he dips his pen in ink and writes.

**Winston's Words:** April 4th, 1984. We had the Two Minutes Hate yesterday. They showed Goldstein's face on the giant screen. It is always Goldstein that gets them going. Goldstein is despised by everyone. He is a traitor to the Party and to all of Oceania. Known as the leader of the Brotherhood, he is supposed to have written a book

that explains everything. But no one really knows if this is true or not.

**Narr 2:** Winston breathes heavily.

**Winston's Words:** No one even knows if the Brotherhood or Goldstein really exists at all. He may just be an invention of the Party to give us something to focus our anger on. But we are taught to hate him just the same.

**Narr 3:** Winston, aware that even his back can give off hints to the telescreen behind him, now stretches and yawns.

**Winston's Thoughts:** It is normal to stretch and yawn, is it not?

**Winston's Words:** The Two Minutes Hate rose to a frenzy. People leaped up and down in their places and shouted at the top of their lungs. There was a dark-haired girl near me. I know little of her other than her name. It is Julia. She was screaming.

**Julia:** Swine! Swine! Swine!

**Winston's Words:** And suddenly she picked up a heavy Newspeak dictionary and flung it at the giant screen, hitting Goldstein's traitorous image right in the nose. Then the picture changed. And there before us was the **visage** we have all come to feel at peace with. It was the **calming** watchful face of Big Brother.

**Narr 4:** Winston remembers something important.

**Winston's Words:** And then, as everyone was chanting "B-B! B-B! B-B!" I felt someone else watching me. I turned my head and for a fraction of a second, I saw a man named O'Brien looking at me. In that instant, I knew... I just *knew*! That O'Brien



was telling me with his eyes: I am with you. I know precisely what you are feeling. I know all about your disgust with the Party. Don't worry. I am on your side.

**Winston's Thoughts:** Does the Brotherhood really exist? Is O'Brien a part of it? Is it possible?

**Narr 5:** Winston looks down at his diary and sees what he has unconsciously written.

**Winston's Words:** DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER. DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER. DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER. DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER.

**Winston's Thoughts:** The Thought Police will surely get me now. I have committed thoughtcrime, and it cannot be concealed forever. It might be tomorrow, or it might be a year from now. Sooner or later, they will capture me and I will be vaporized.

**Winston's Words:** They'll shoot me I don't care they'll shoot me in the back of the neck I don't care down with big brother they always shoot you in the back of the neck I don't care down with big brother —

**Narr 1:** Somewhat ashamed of himself yet also somewhat proud, Winston puts his diary back in his desk drawer and locks it.

**Narr 2:** Just then, there is a knock at his door.

## SCENE 2

**Narr 3:** Winston opens his door to find Mrs. Parsons, his neighbor, looking upset.

**Mrs. Parsons:** Oh, comrade! I thought I heard you come in. Do you think you could come over

and have a look at our kitchen sink? It is all blocked up.

**Narr 4:** This is Winston's side job. He is the building's **superintendent**. He follows his neighbor into her apartment and is confronted by her son and daughter.

**Boy:** Up with your hands! You're a traitor! You're a Thought-criminal! You're a Eurasian spy! I'll shoot you! I'll vaporize you!

**Girl:** Traitor! Thought-criminal!

**Mrs. Parsons:** Don't mind them. They're disappointed because I can't take them to the hanging today.

**Boy:** Why can't we go and see the hanging?

**Girl:** Want to see the hanging! Want to see the hanging!

**Narr 5:** Some Eurasian prisoners are scheduled to be hanged today. It is an event that happens frequently, and the people of London are encouraged to attend and bring their children.

**Winston's Thoughts:** In another year, maybe two, these children will be turning their mother in to the Thought Police. It happens all the time.

**Narr 1:** Winston fixes Mrs. Parson's clogged sink and returns to his apartment. It is getting late. He lies down and goes to sleep and dreams of the man he had shared a look with during the Two Minutes Hate.

**O'Brien:** We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness.

## SCENE 3

**Narr 2:** In the morning, Winston shuffles off to work.

**Narr 3:** At the Ministry of Truth, Winston works in the Records Department. It is his job to take existing news clippings of old stories and rewrite them in the language of Newspeak. He does this without any creativity, writing in whichever way the Party sees fit.

**Narr 4:** Winston's job is by no means original. There are hundreds of workers on the floor doing the same thing. He does not know whether they are rewriting the same stories he is or whether they are working on other stories.

**Winston's Thoughts:** For all I know, they could be **fabricating** new news stories! There is no "truth" anymore. The only truth is what the Party wants us to believe.

**Narr 5:** At lunch, Winston sits at a table and is joined by a man named Syme who works in the Research Department.

**Syme:** Just the man I was looking for! I wanted to know whether you have any razor blades.

**Winston:** Not one! I've tried looking all over the place, but they don't exist anymore.

**Winston's Thoughts:** I have two razor blades left, actually, but I have to **hoard** them for myself.

### \* vocab

**DETECTED:** noticed

**VISAGE:** face, appearance

**SUPERINTENDENT:** a person in charge of maintenance and repairs of an apartment building

**FABRICATING:** faking, making up, inventing

**HOARD:** to stock up, accumulate

When the Party decides to stop offering items to the public, you have to hold on to whatever you have left for dear life.

**Syme:** That's too bad. I've been using my last blade for six weeks! Say Winston, old chap, did you go to see the hanging yesterday?

**Winston's Thoughts:** Everyone is obsessed with the hangings. They occur frequently, but you would think they were few and far between the way people drool over them.

**Winston:** No, I did not. I was working. I suppose I will see it on the flicks soon enough.

**Syme:** It was a good hanging! Though I think it spoils it when they tie their feet together. I like to see the traitors kicking.

**Narr 1:** Syme goes on, and Winston has to force his face to look as if he is interested in the gory details. Big Brother is watching you, always.

**Syme:** You know that I'm working on the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak dictionary? We're getting the language into the final shape—the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. It's an amazing thing to destroy words!

**Winston:** I imagine it is.

**Syme:** The destruction of words is such a beautiful thing! Take the word *good*, for instance. If you have a word like *good*, then why do you need a word like *bad*? Just use *ungood*. Or again, if you want a stronger version of *good*, why use *excellent* or *splendid*? When *plusgood* or even *double-plusgood* can **suffice**? Do you see the beauty in it, Winston? It was Big Brother's idea, of course.

**Narr 2:** Syme's enthusiasm carries him through his speech without allowing Winston the opportunity to speak.

**Syme:** By the year 2050—earlier probably—all real knowledge of our Oldspeak language will have disappeared. The whole literature of the past will be destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton—they all will exist in Newspeak versions only. The literature we know won't only be changed into something different, but it will actually be changed into something entirely **contradictory** of what it used to be. Isn't that fascinating?

**Winston's Thoughts:** No doubt, Syme will be vaporized. Though he loves the Party and is enthusiastic in his ideas, there is something wrong with him. He lacks **discretion** and **aloofness**. One day, the Party will not tolerate his running mouth anymore, and he will become an unperson.

**Syme:** How can you have a slogan like "Freedom is slavery" if the very concept of freedom is unknown? I tell you, even our beloved slogans will have to change.

**Narr 3:** Winston speaks with as much interest as he can **muster**.

**Winston:** That is indeed something.

**Narr 4:** Yet he wonders ... and fears.

## SCENE 4

**Narr 5:** After the workday is over, Winston walks through the backstreets of London and finds himself at the very same antique shop where, just the other day, he had purchased his diary.

**Winston's Thoughts:** It is dangerous to show interest in **relics** or do anything outside of what the Party deems ordinary. But I cannot resist the urge to discover something pure.

**Narr 1:** The shopkeeper, Mr. Charrington, an older man with white hair and a limp, shows Winston a rare, heavy lump of glass. It is curved on one side and flat on the other.

**Narr 2:** Inside the glass there is a very small, strange pink object. Winston is spellbound by it.

**Winston:** What is it?

**Mr. Charrington:** That's coral. It must have come from the Indian Ocean. They used to embed it in glass. Probably a hundred years ago. More, by the look of it.

**Winston:** It's a beautiful thing.

**Mr. Charrington:** That it is. But there's not many people who would call it that nowadays. If you want to buy it, it'll cost you four dollars.

**Narr 3:** Winston immediately hands over the money, and the glass is his.

**Mr. Charrington:** You know,

### \* vocab

**SUFFICE:** to be enough to satisfy

**CONTRADICTION:** opposite

**DISCRETION:** cautious reserve in speech

**ALOOFNESS:** the quality of being emotionally distant or indifferent

**MUSTER:** to gather, summon up

**RELICS:** ancient or historical objects

**MAHOGANY:** a reddish brown wood

**CONFINES:** boundaries

**INEVITABILITY:** something that can't be avoided

there's a room upstairs that you might care to take a look at. You seem like a fellow who might be interested in such things.

**Narr 4:** Mr. Charrington leads Winston to the back of the shop and up the stairs and into a room.

**Mr. Charrington:** We lived here until my wife died. There's a beautiful **mahogany** bed and a bookcase with a few books. Take a look around. See if there's anything you like.

**Narr 5:** Winston takes it all in and comes to a sudden realization.

**Winston:** There's no telescreen!

**Mr. Charrington:** Ah, I never had one of those blasted things.

**Winston's Thoughts:** Is it possible? Is this actually a room that escapes the ever-watchful eye of Big Brother?

**Narr 1:** Winston's eye roams the room, and his gaze falls on a picture of a building that is hanging on the wall. He walks over to it.

**Winston:** I remember that building. It's in ruins now, but I knew it once. So long ago. ... Thank you for the strange glass, comrade. Good-bye.

**Narr 2:** Winston leaves the room, walks down the stairs, and goes back out onto the street. He caresses his new possession in the **confines** of his pocket. As he does so greedily, the woman who had caught his eye the other day during the Two Minutes Hate passes him.

**Winston's Thoughts:** Her name is Julia. She must be a spy for the Party. It is not a coincidence that we would meet all the way out here. She knows of my thought-crime. She can sense it. I know it.

**Narr 3:** Julia walks away, hurriedly. Winston contemplates killing her with the glass object in his pocket in order to save himself. But he knows he cannot bring himself to do it.

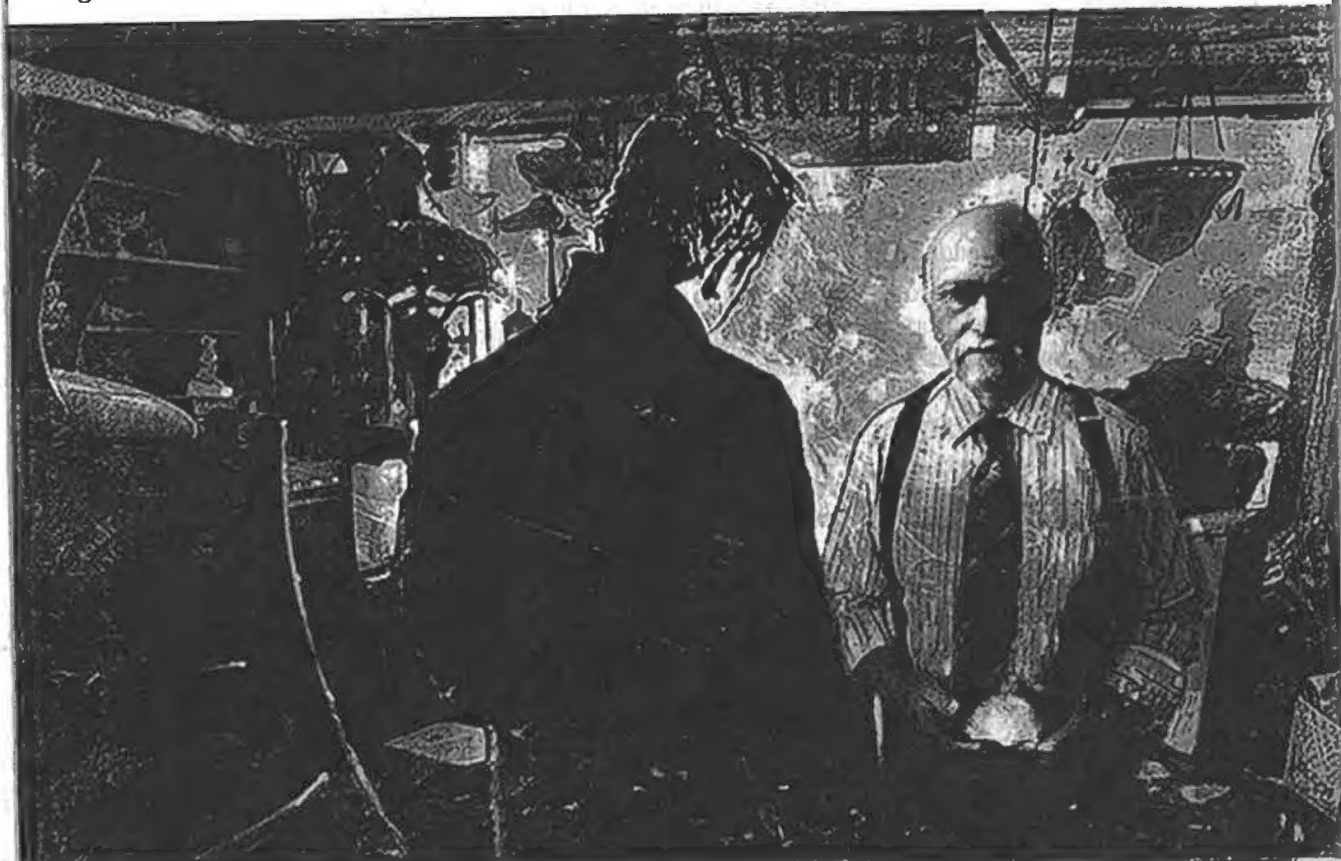
**Winston's Thoughts:** I will be vaporized soon enough. It is an **inevitability**.

## SCENE 5

**Narr 4:** The next day, Winston is walking through the halls of the Ministry of Truth when he sees Julia again. She is walking directly toward him.

**Winston's Thoughts:** This is where it will end. This woman will call me out right here and now. She will tell everyone that I am a Thought-criminal, and I will be finished.

**Narr 5:** Julia does no such thing.





Instead, she trips and falls just in front of Winston. The papers she is carrying spill out and scatter across the floor.

**Narr 1:** Winston is still **leery** of her but decides that if he does not help her, it will look suspicious.

**Narr 2:** While helping her gather up her papers, Winston suddenly feels something in his hand.

**Winston's Thoughts:** She has placed a note in my hand! She did it so quick that I didn't even realize! Surely no one else saw.

**Narr 3:** Julia stands and so does Winston.

**Julia:** Thank you, comrade.

**Narr 4:** She smiles politely and walks away. Winston is left wondering what could possibly be in the note. But he dares not look at it. He casually slips the note in his pocket.

**Narr 5:** Winston goes back to his desk and does his work. All the while he is thinking of the note.

**Narr 1:** When he at last believes it is safe and no one is looking, Winston takes the note out of his pocket and reads it.

**Winston's Words:** The note said: *I love you.*

## SCENE 6

**Narr 2:** With those three words, Winston feels changed. He now sees Julia in a completely different light. In his mind, she is no longer an enemy, but rather, a beautiful partner against the Party.

**Winston's Words:** I tried to get close to her again for days, but there were always other people around. It was not safe to approach her. And then, a week after the note, I saw my opportunity. She was sitting alone at

a table in the cafeteria. I approached her with my lunch and sat down.

**Narr 3:** After a few moments of silence where Winston makes doubly sure that no one else is watching or listening, he speaks to her softly out of the corner of his mouth.

**Winston:** Do you know the antique shop you saw me come out of last week?

**Julia:** Yes.

**Winston:** There is a room above it. I have rented it.

**Julia:** OK.

**Winston:** The shopkeeper is an older gentleman. He is trustworthy. And there are no telescreens. Can you meet me there?

**Julia:** Yes. When?

**Winston:** Tonight. Seven o'clock.

**Julia:** I will see you then.



**Narr 4:** Julia stands up from the table and walks away.

**Winston's Words:** We never even looked at each other.

**Narr 5:** That evening, Julia and Winston meet in the room above the antique shop.

**Narr 1:** Winston opens the door and sees Julia standing there, smiling at him.

**Winston:** Would you believe, that until this very moment, I did not even know what color your eyes were?

**Narr 2:** Julia wraps her arms around Winston and kisses him. He shuts the door.

## SCENE 7

**Narr 3:** Over the next few months, Julia and Winston meet each other in their secret room from time to time. They are taking a huge risk, and they know it.

**Narr 4:** When they meet, they discuss their hatred for the Party and for Big Brother.

**Narr 5:** On one occasion, Julia brings chocolate and coffee. Winston is amazed.

**Winston:** Is this ... *real* coffee? How did you get it? Only Inner Party members are allowed real coffee.

**Julia:** Anyone can get their hands on anything if they try hard enough, Winston.

**Narr 1:** Julia sees a quick flash of something in the corner of the room.

**Julia:** Oh!

**Winston:** What is it?

**Julia:** A rat! I just saw him stick his beastly nose out of a hole and then run back into the wall.

**Winston:** Rats! In this room?

**Julia:** My dear ... you've gone pale. It is just a rat.

**Winston:** Of all the horrors in the world—a rat!

**Julia:** Don't be so frightened. It is gone.

**Winston:** I'm sorry. It's nothing. I just don't like rats, that's all.

**Winston's Thoughts:** In fact, I am terrified of them.

**Narr 2:** It takes awhile for Winston to calm down. When he does, they discuss whether or not an actual Brotherhood exists.

**Winston:** I believe I know a man whom we can trust.

**Julia:** Who?

**Winston:** His name is O'Brien. I see him in my dreams sometimes. We shared a look once during the Two Minutes Hate. It was just a look and it only lasted a brief moment, but I believe he was telling me something with his eyes.

**Julia:** I am very **perceptive** about these things. I'm sure you are too. If you believe this man is fighting for the cause and is a member of the Brotherhood, you are probably right.

## SCENE 8

**Narr 3:** Winston takes Julia's words to heart. The next day, he sees O'Brien in the halls at the Ministry of Truth. Unbelievably, O'Brien approaches him.

**O'Brien:** Your name is Winston Smith, correct?

**Winston:** Yes.

**Winston's Words:** He spoke loudly to me so that everyone

could hear. In that moment, I was certain I had been wrong about him and that he was about to **proclaim** me a Thought-criminal.

**O'Brien:** You work in the Records Department. I have read your work. It is good.

**Winston:** Thank you.

**O'Brien:** Have you seen the latest edition of the Newspeak dictionary, Winston?

**Winston:** No, I have not.

**O'Brien:** Come to my house this evening and I will lend you a copy. You should read it. I believe it will be very **advantageous** for you.

**Narr 4:** O'Brien hands Winston a piece of paper with his address on it.

**Narr 5:** Later that evening, Winston meets Julia in their secret room and discusses it with her. They decide that O'Brien is indeed a member of the Brotherhood against the Party and that he was reaching out to Winston, asking him to join the fight.

**Winston:** Either that or it's a trap.

**Julia:** Yes, that is possible, of course. But what does it matter? Sooner or later we will be vaporized. We might as well try to fight while we can.

**Narr 1:** They leave the room and the shop separately and head for O'Brien's house.

### \* vocab

**LEERY:** suspicious

**PERCEPTIVE:** having good insight

**PROCLAIM:** to announce, declare

**ADVANTAGEOUS:** useful, favorable



**Narr 2:** At O'Brien's they confess that they believe there is a Brotherhood and that O'Brien is part of it.

**O'Brien:** It took a great deal of courage for you both to come here tonight. If you were wrong about me, you would be in the hands of the Thought Police by now. Are you completely prepared to fight and die for the cause?

**Winston and Julia:** Yes.

**O'Brien:** You must understand that being a part of the Brotherhood means that your days are numbered. You will have to get used to living without results and without hope. You will work for a while, you will be caught, you will confess—that is inevitable—and then you will be shot. Do you understand this?

**Winston and Julia:** Yes.

**O'Brien:** Everybody confesses. But you will never have much knowledge of the inner workings of the Brotherhood. You will only be able to confess what you do. And, of course, you will name me. That is inevitable as well. But we do not care for our own lives. There is no possibility that change will come in our lifetimes. We are the dead.

**Narr 3:** O'Brien hands Winston a copy of a book. The cover says that it is the Newspeak dictionary—Volume 19. In actuality, it is a copy of Goldstein's book.

**Winston:** So Goldstein actually exists?

**O'Brien:** He exists. The Party is all-powerful, but they cannot stop our hearts and minds.

**Narr 4:** Winston and Julia leave separately for their own homes.

**Narr 5:** The next evening, they meet again in the small room above the antique shop. They curl up next to each other on the bed, and Winston reads Goldstein's book to Julia.

**Narr 1:** It is a very detailed explanation of the world that they live in. But it is not necessarily new information.

**Winston:** It really only tells *how* the Party works. I already know *how* it works. I want to know *why*! Why are things the way they are?

**Julia:** Someday things will change. But it will always be the same for us. It's like O'Brien said ... we are the dead.

**Winston:** We are the dead.

**Iron Voice:** You are the dead!

**Narr 2:** Winston and Julia jump up from the bed. Their blood has turned to ice. Julia whispers to Winston.

**Julia:** It came from behind the picture.

**Iron Voice:** It came from behind the picture. Remain exactly where you are. Make no movement until you are ordered.

**Winston's Thoughts:** It is starting. It is starting at last. To run for life, to get out of this place before it is too late—that is unthinkable.

**Narr 3:** The picture falls from the wall and hits the floor, uncovering a large telescreen behind it.

**Julia:** Now they can see us.

**Iron Voice:** Now we can see you. Stand in the middle of the room. Stand back to back. Clasp your hands behind your heads. The house is surrounded.

**Julia:** I suppose we may as well say good-bye.

**Iron Voice:** You may as well say good-bye.

**Narr 4:** The sound of the helicopter outside their window approaches and becomes deafening. There are loud crashes as men swing in on ropes through the windows, breaking them.

**Narr 5:** One of the men sees the glass object with the coral in it that Winston loves so dearly. He smashes it on the floor.

**Narr 1:** The last thing that Winston sees before he is knocked unconscious is Mr. Charrington. The shopkeeper seems younger. His hair is different. He no longer limps. He ...

**Winston's Thoughts:** He is a member of the Thought Police.

**Narr 2:** Winston's world goes dark.

## SCENE 9

**Narr 3:** Winston wakes up in a prison cell. It is dark, and he is in tremendous pain.

**Narr 4:** Other prisoners come and go. Often, they are bellowing to be forgiven of their sins. Sometimes they are beaten. Sometimes, when the guard comes to take them out, he points at them **menacingly** and says ...

**Guard:** Room 101.

**Prisoner:** No! Please! Anything but that! What else is it you want to know? There's nothing I won't confess! You've been starving me for weeks. Finish it off and let me die. Shoot me. Hang me. Sentence me to 25 years. Is there

somebody else you want me to give away? Just say who it is, and I'll tell you anything you want. I've got a wife and three children. They are guilty! Take them! But don't send me to Room 101!

Guard: Room 101.

Narr 5: The prisoner is dragged away, and Winston is alone again.

Narr 1: Some hours or days later, Winston is moved to a smaller cell. There, he is starved and beaten repeatedly. An unknown amount of time goes by. And then, the door opens and O'Brien walks in.

Winston: O'Brien! They got you too!

O'Brien: They got me a long time ago, comrade.

Narr 2: Understanding crosses Winston's **emaciated** face.

O'Brien: You knew this, Winston. Don't deceive yourself. You have always known this.

Narr 3: A guard beats Winston with a club, and he again loses consciousness.

Narr 4: When Winston wakes, he is strapped, faceup, on a table. O'Brien's face hovers above him. He holds a dial in his hand.

O'Brien: Don't worry, Winston. You are in my keeping. I have watched over you for seven years now. You are a difficult case, indeed. One of the most difficult I have ever encountered. But you will be cured. I shall make you perfect.

Narr 5: Without warning, O'Brien turns the dial in his hand, and a wave of electricity and pain floods through Winston's body.

O'Brien: That was 40. You can see that the dial goes up to 100. If you tell me lies, you will cry out in pain. Do you understand?

Winston: Yes.

O'Brien: You know perfectly well what is wrong with you, Winston. You are mentally deranged. For example, who is Oceania currently at war with?

Winston: Eurasia.

O'Brien: No. Oceania was never at war with Eurasia. Oceania is and always has been at war with Eastasia.

Winston: But that's not true. That's not what I remember.

O'Brien: What is true is what the Party says is true. Nothing more. In the future there will be no loyalty and no love except the love of Big Brother. If you want a picture of the future, imagine

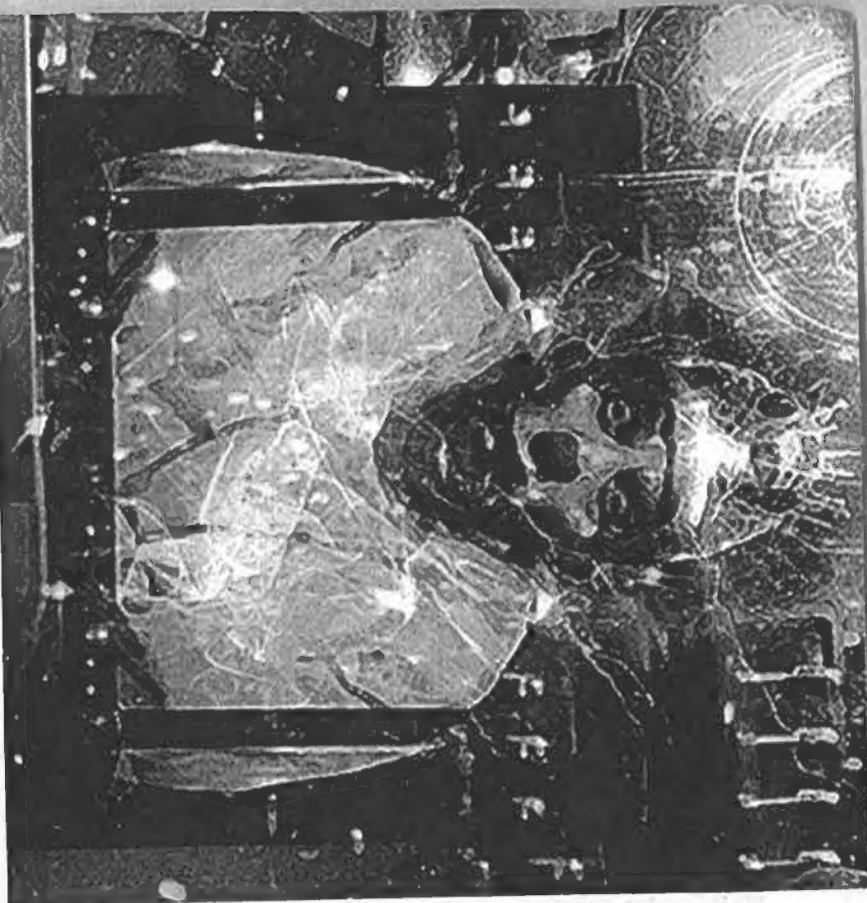
a boot stamping on a human face—forever.

Winston: The Party cannot control thoughts or memories.

O'Brien: Oh yes we can. The Party controls everything Winston, even the past. There is a Party slogan that I know you are familiar with that goes: *Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.* Is it of **your opinion**, Winston, that **the past** has real existence?

Winston: I ... don't know what you expect me to say.

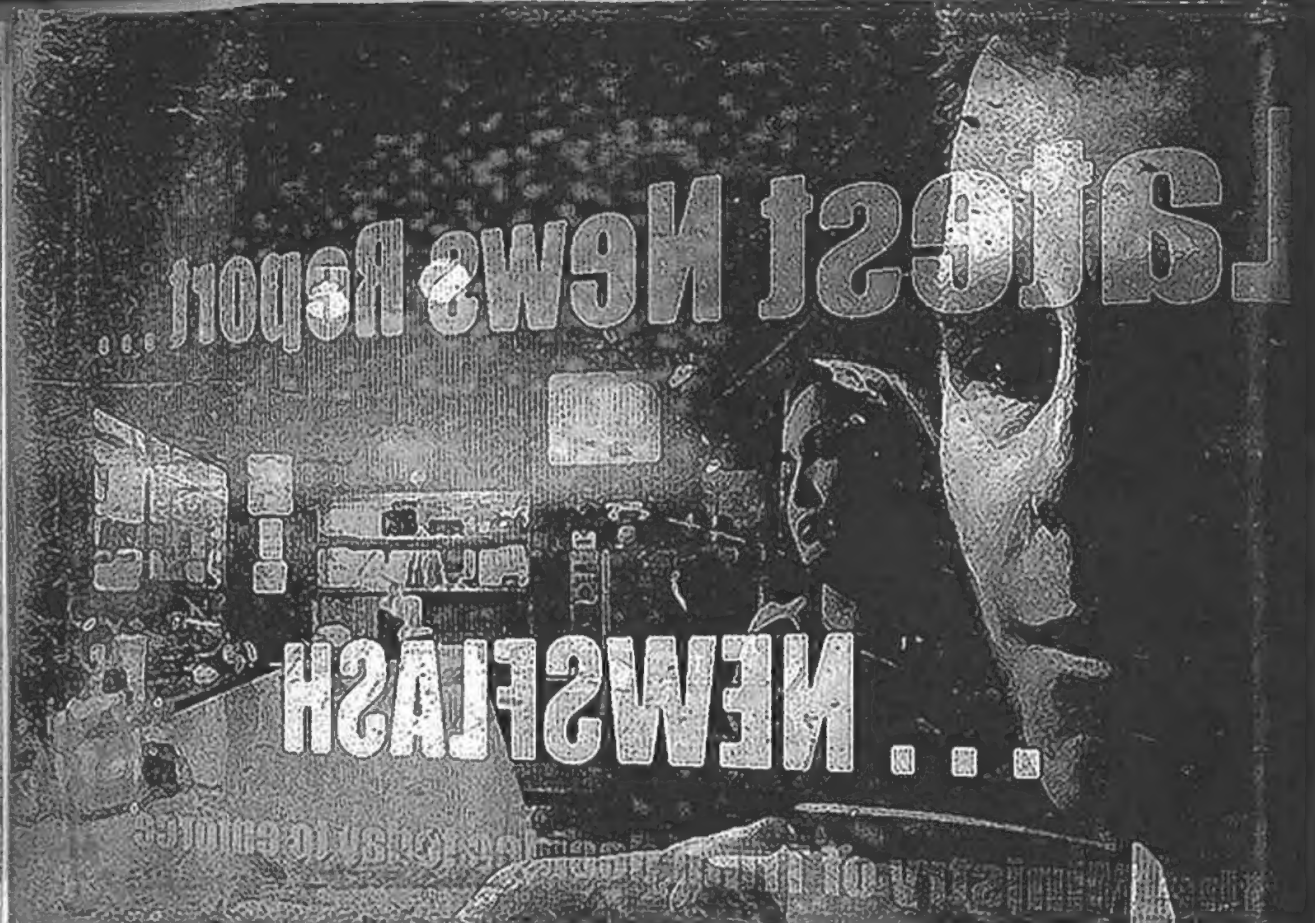
Narr 1: O'Brien turns the dial



**\* vocab**

**MENACINGLY:** threateningly

**EMACIATED:** grotesquely thin



in his hand to 50, and Winston screams in agony.

**O'Brien:** I want you to say what you believe. Nothing more. You work in the Records Department, Winston! You yourself change the past on a daily basis!

**Winston:** But how can you control memory? You cannot control mine.

**O'Brien:** Do you remember writing in your diary, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four"?

**Winston:** Yes.

**Narr 2:** O'Brien holds four fingers in front of Winston's face.

**O'Brien:** How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?

**Winston:** Four.

**Narr 3:** The dial turns, and the pain is excruciating.

**O'Brien:** The Party says it is five. So it is five.

**Winston:** I'm sorry. I wish I could see five, but I only see four. How can I see five when there are four?

**O'Brien:** You will see, Winston. You will. Room 101.

## SCENE 10

**Narr 4:** Winston is sitting upright in a chair. His entire body is strapped tight. Even his face is strapped to the back of the chair. He cannot move a muscle.

**Narr 5:** O'Brien is moving next to Winston. He places something on the table next to him. It is a kind of wire contraption.

**O'Brien:** You have always known what is in Room 101, Winston. What is here in Room 101 is the

worst thing in the world. For every person it is different. For you, the worst thing in the world ... is rats.

**Narr 1:** O'Brien carries the wire contraption to the middle of the room so that Winston can see it contains two giant rats:

**Winston:** Please don't do this. I'll tell you anything you want to hear. Please. Please just kill me.

**O'Brien:** We *will* kill you, Winston, soon enough. We will wipe your record clear. You shall be lifted clean from the stream of history. Nothing will remain of you. Not a name. Not a living memory. You will be **annihilated** in the past as well as the future. It will be as if you never existed. But first, you will understand that the Party is everything. Big Brother is everything.



Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!

**Narr 4:** O'Brien is pleased. The horrific wire contraption comes off of Winston's face just as he faints in the chair.

## SCENE 11

**Narr 5:** Six months later, Winston is sitting in a restaurant watching the news on the tele-screen when Julia walks in and sits down beside him.

**Julia:** I betrayed you.

**Winston:** I betrayed you.

**Julia:** Sometimes, they threaten you with something so horrible ... that you just have to say "Don't do it to me, do it to so-and-sol" And afterward, you trick yourself into thinking you said that only because it was what they wanted to hear. But you know that you *really* wanted them to do it to the other person. Just to save yourself.

**Winston:** Yes.

**Narr 1:** They sit in silence for a bit. There is nothing left to say. Julia leaves.

**Narr 2:** On the telescreen there is an announcement. Oceania has declared a major victory in the war against Eastasia.

**Narr 3:** Winston hears the majestic music playing in the background. He looks up and gazes into the enormous mustached face.

### \* vocab

**ANNIHILATED:** utterly destroyed

**PARTITIONS:** walls that separate or divide

**Narr 2:** O'Brien straps the contraption to Winston's face. Winston can now see clearly that there are three separate **partitions** within it. O'Brien opens one, and the rats fly through to the next. Snarling closer to Winston's face.

**Winston:** O'Brien, please! What is it you want me to do?

**O'Brien:** I want you to believe that two and two make five if the Party says it is so. I want you to know in your heart it is true. I want you to love Big Brother. I want you to give up your beliefs and your love for anything outside the Party.

**Narr 3:** Suddenly, Winston's paralyzing fear changes, and he realizes how he can save himself.

**Winston:** (*screaming*) Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me!

**Winston's Thoughts:** O cruel, needless misunderstanding!

**Narr 4:** Two tears stream down either side of Winston's face. But it is all right. Everything is all right. His struggle is finished.

**Narr 5:** Winston has at last won his own victory ... over himself.

**Winston's Thoughts:** I love Big Brother. ■

## Think About It

Reread one of the Party's slogans: Freedom is slavery. Read it once more. It is a thought composed of only three words, but it stands for such a complex idea. What does the slogan mean to you?

## About the Author



George Orwell is the pseudonym (pen name) of Eric Arthur Blair. Blair was born in India in 1903.

Later, Blair lived in Burma (now Myanmar) and joined the Indian Imperial Police of Burma. There, he witnessed his own government ruling people with an iron fist. Blair quickly became ashamed of working for "the hand of the oppressor."

Those experiences and feelings led Blair to become a writer later in life. In 1948, as George Orwell, he created the terrifying futuristic world of 1984, where Big Brother (the government) watches your every move, controls your future, your present, and yes, even your past.

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